Craig Stanford, the second speaker in the Allan Wilson Centre 2013 Lecture Series, tours six cities throughout New Zealand from 30 August to 7 September. Craig is Professor of Biological Sciences and Anthropology at the University of Southern California (USC), where he also co-directs the USC Jane Goodall Research Centre.

PLANET *without* APES

Craig's research focus is the behaviour and ecology of primates, and the great apes in particular. Craig's work has taken him around the globe, conducting field research in East Africa, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Central and South America.

In addition to documenting his findings in academic articles prepared for scientific audiences, Craig has written several books throughout his career, making his theories and research findings accessible to the general public. The first of these, *The Hunting Apes,* was published in 1999 and examined the potential role hunting for meat may have played in early human evolution.

The book built on ideas developed during Craig's in-depth field study in the 1990s in Gombe Stream National Park, Tanzania. This work focused on the hunting behaviours of chimpanzees, who are frequent hunters, unlike the three other great ape species - bonobos, gorillas and orangutans. By following chimpanzee hunting parties, and studying two groups of the red colobus monkey that are the chimpanzees' main prey, Craig identified several environmental and social factors which appear to contribute to hunting episodes. These findings were key points in developing a model of how and why human ancestors may have hunted meat. In *The Hunting Apes,* Craig argued that the desire to eat meat was an important factor in hominin evolution, driving increases in brain size, as the effective hunting and sharing of meat required enhanced social skills and organisation.

From 1996 until 2005, Craig conducted a field study within the evocatively named Bwindi Impenetrable National Park in Uganda, the only forest in which chimpanzees and mountain gorillas live together in the same habitat. It is known that several hominid species must have had shared habitats in the past, and the mountain gorillas and chimpanzees at Bwindi provide a contemporary example of the sharing of a habitat and its resources.

Over the study period very few interactions between chimpanzees and gorillas were observed, although they were seen to occasionally feed or nest in the same or adjacent trees. They only very rarely showed any aggression towards each other. As well as studying the interactions between the chimpanzee and mountain gorillas at Bwindi, Craig also studied the use of bipedal posture by chimpanzees. His observations of bipedalism in chimpanzees are described and discussed with theories of human evolution in his book *Upright: The evolutionary key to becoming human,* published in 2003.

Craig's research into primate behaviour continues, with these species that are so closely related to humans providing valuable clues and insights into the lives of our ancestors. In recent years, however, Craig has balanced this work with an increasing emphasis on conservation issues faced by primates and other animals. In his latest book *Planet without Apes,* he describes the immediate problems facing the world's great ape populations, and urges action to ensure their survival.

The loss of tropical forest habitat is a major threat to orangutan populations in Sumatra and Borneo, and bonobo, chimpanzee and gorilla populations in equatorial Africa. Over the last three decades vast areas of forest in Borneo have been replaced by palm oil plantations, and in Africa forests have also been reduced, and territories divided by roads.

Apes are also at risk in Africa from hunting. While people in Africa have hunted and eaten apes for millennia, a growing commercial trade in 'bushmeat' is now posing a serious threat to the survival of chimpanzees, bonobos and gorillas.

Our shared genetic ancestry also leaves the great apes susceptible to many human-borne diseases, several of which are now spreading into wild ape populations, causing further population losses. In *Planet without Apes* Craig describes these and several other threats to the great apes, and presents his case for why their continued existence is so important to humans, and why and how we should act urgently to save these four species so similar to ourselves.

Professor Craig Stanford will be touring New Zealand as a guest of the Allan Wilson Centre for Molecular Ecology and Evolution

Auckland	**Tauranga**	**Wellington**	**Palmerston North**	**Christchurch**	**Dunedin**
Friday 30 August, 6.15pm, Auckland Museum Events Centre, $15/10 for Auckland Museum Institute members, Auckland Writers & Readers Festival Patrons and Friends, and students with ID	Monday 02 September, 6.30pm, refreshments, 7.00pm talk begins, Baycourt Community and Arts Centre, 38 Durham Street	Wednesday 04 September, 6.00pm, Embassy Theatre, Courtenay Place, $15/10 for Royal Society Wellington Branch members and students with ID	Thursday 05 September, 6.30pm, Central Library, 4 The Square	Friday 06 September 6.30pm, University of Canterbury, CLT1/2/3	Saturday 07 September, 6.30pm, University of Otago, St David's Lecture Theatre

ALLAN WILSON CENTRE
FOR MOLECULAR ECOLOGY AND EVOLUTION

BOOKINGS: Seats may be reserved, and tickets purchased (for Wellington and Auckland) online at: http://www.allanwilsoncentre.ac.nz Click 'Book Now' under 'News and Events'. The Auckland lecture is in partnership with the Auckland Museum Institute and the Auckland Writers & Readers Festival.